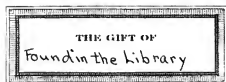
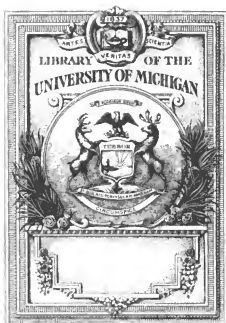




# *Rubá'iyát of Omar Khayyám*

Omar Khayyam, George Roe



رُبَاعِيَّاتِ عُمَرُ خَيَّام

OMAR KHAYYAM

Yours sincerely  
George Rye  
San Antonio, Tex.  
Dec. 14<sup>th</sup> 1922.





THE LULLABY. BY JOHN EVERETT MILLAIS.

When in the market-place I stopped one day  
To watch a potter pounding his fresh clay,  
The clay addressed him in a mystic tongue —  
"Once I was man, so treat me gently, pray!"

In the frontispiece, Omar is depicted in the potter's house, watching the potter pounding his fresh clay, and while he watches, he hears the clay pleading in a mystic tongue, "Oh potter, treat me gently, I pray thee, for once I was a man, even as thou art; and as the ever-turning wheel of fate revolves, thou, too, shalt become helpless clay, even as I am." And Omar, listening, wonders what this endless chain of recurring life and death can mean, — the clay becoming man, the man becoming clay, and the clay becoming man once more; life to death, death to life, in alternate succession through all the days of Abad, which are the days of eternity without end.

Thus it is that the philosopher-poet is lost in a maze of speculation, and his face grows sad at the utter failure of his attempt to pierce the "Secret of Eternity," the "Asrar-i-Azal" that no mortal man has ever fathomed.

In the foreground, sit the potter's children, playing, but no thought of the future mars for them the pleasure of the passing moment; they do not yet know the signification of such words as *life* and *death*, and their very ignorance is a shield against trouble.

With Omar, however, it is otherwise, for he has not yet reached the calm joy of the Sufi, who believes that all life is but a part of God, and well might he cry with Koheleth, "In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."



RUBÁ'IYAT  
OF  
OMAR KHAYYAM

A NEW METRICAL VERSION RENDERED  
INTO ENGLISH FROM VARIOUS  
PERSIAN SOURCES

BY  
GEORGE ROE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND MANY NOTES AND  
REFERENCES, AND AN ORIGINAL  
"ODE TO OMAR"

FRONTISPIECE BY  
ADELAIDE HANSCOM LEESON



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To  
MY FELLOW MEMBERS  
OF  
THE OMAR KHAYYÁM CLUB OF AMERICA  
AND ESPECIALLY TO  
MR. NATHAN HASKELL DOLE  
MR. CHARLES D. BURRAGE  
AND  
MR. EBEN F. THOMPSON  
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED AS A TOKEN OF GRATITUDE  
FOR THE KINDNESS AND ENCOURAGEMENT  
I HAVE RECEIVED AT THEIR HANDS



# ربا الحیل چشم

گر گوهر طاعت نسفتم هرگز  
گردد گنه از چهره زرفتم هرگز  
نومید نیم ز بارگاه کرم  
زیراکه یکی را دو نگفتم هرگز

This in thy Service Pearls I neer shall thread,  
Nor cleanse the dust my countless Sins have spread,  
By this one Grace I hope for Mercy still, —  
Neer called I Two, the One great Fountain-head.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
<u>INTRODUCTION . . . . .</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>AN ODE TO OMAR . . . . .</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>RUBÁ'İYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM . . . . .</u>	<u>29</u>

# INTRODUCTION

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**B**ETWEEN those English versions of Omar which sacrifice the letter to the requirements of good verse and those which, in order to be literal, sacrifice the spirit to the letter, there is a great gulf. I have attempted a middle course, and the following stanzas are the result.

In striving to accomplish two objects, it has sometimes been necessary to disregard the one in order to attain the other, and hence, while my desire to be literal may have often marred my verses, my desire to write a readable poem, with a connection between the stanzas that does not exist in the *diwan* form, may have tempted me to depart too readily from the letter.

Whatever may be the faults or merits of the translation, however, I believe that the marginal references cannot fail to prove valuable to Omarian students. Upon the left-hand margin is given the number of each quatrain in the leading English, German, French, and Italian translations, while the references upon the right-hand margin indicate some of the MSS. and reproductions where the Persian text of the stanza may be found.

With the exception of Mr. FitzGerald's masterpiece, the English metrical versions selected for comparison have been chosen not so much for their merits as poetical compositions as because they are *bona fide* translations.

Of the numerous imitations of Mr. FitzGerald's poem, some are written with great smoothness, but even in the best that have come to my notice the epigrammatic terseness of

## INTRODUCTION

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Omar is beaten out into such a long string of musical, but thin and weakly stanzas, that it seems scarcely fair to hang them upon the heavy-laden peg of the old tent-maker's reputation.

The compounding of two or more quatrains into one, or the expanding of a single quatrain into many, can be successful only in the hands of genius; I have, therefore, avoided such an attempt, and each of my stanzas, however imperfect, is the representative of an individual ruba'i. Unlike other translators who have followed this method, I have, however, attempted to weave the separate quatrains into a little poem whose form bears no resemblance to the disjointed arrangement of the original MSS.

The metre which I have adopted is the Iambic Pentameter, but I have occasionally substituted a Trochee for the initial Iambus, and in one line it has seemed desirable to drop entirely the final Iambus.

What appears to be the generally accepted English pronunciation of proper names has been used throughout, although such form may offend the ear of a purist. Thus, كُرْأَن Kur'án, becomes Kóran; بَهْرَام Bahrám, becomes Báhrám, etc. Both pronunciations of Bahram are used by Whinfield, and while FitzGerald writes the accent upon the last syllable, it is necessary to change its position in scanning the line.

In selecting the Iambic Pentameter, I have been influenced rather by the usage of other translators than by that of Omar himself, whose various forms of metre generally contain more than ten syllables, and who would, therefore,



## INTRODUCTION

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be better represented by a longer measure, such as the Alexandrine.

Mr. Whinfield suggests, in his scholarly introduction, that the large number of monosyllabic words contained in English counterbalance the brevity of the decasyllabic line, or, in other words, that it is possible to express oneself in fewer syllables when writing English than would be possible if Persian were employed. This would undoubtedly be true of that form of Persian used in India, but, as Mr. Scott Waring pointedly remarks, "The language of the Persians is wonderfully laconic, while that spoken in India is ridiculously verbose; in Persia it is soft and sweet, in India harsh and disagreeable." The very sweetness of the Persian tongue, however, the great number of similar sounds pleasing to the ear, and the ease with which thoughts can be musically expressed, give to Persian poetry an airy lightness that could not be easily reproduced in Alexandrine verses; hence the choice of a shorter and lighter measure is probably well advised, although it will be found that comparatively few of the Iambic Pentameters quoted in the marginal references have been able to bear the full burden of the Persian quatrains which they represent.

My translation follows the original in that the first, second, and fourth lines, and occasionally all four lines, are rhymed, and in that the rhyme-word is sometimes thrown back a few syllables, and followed by what is technically known as the "redif" or *rearword*. This form of *throwback* and *redif* often gives the quatrain a quaintly musical sound and is excellently illustrated by Mr. Nathan Haskell Dole in the

## INTRODUCTION

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following stanzas, which he has kindly permitted me to quote from his "Multi-variorum" Edition of the Ruba'iyat : —

- " Sage OMAR ! would thou wert alive again !  
Then might we surely see thee strive again  
To gather from the bitter flowers of Fate  
Sweet honey for our human hive again !
- " The stars still shine as once they brightly shone,  
When, as they watched thy terrace, nightly shone  
The answering flashes of thy love and hate,  
And red gleams of the wine-cup nightly shone !
- " The blood-red petals from the roses fall, as then they did,  
Death for us moderns closes all, as then it did ;  
We know not more than thou didst know of life-to-be ;  
The ruthless Wheel of Heaven disposes all, as then it did.
- " But thy example makes us brave to face our Fate ;  
There may be love beyond the grave to grace our Fate,  
And we, meanwhile, will keep alive the glow of life, to  
be  
Worth saving, if great ALLAH deign to save, to grace our  
Fate.
- " And so accept this volume as a meed of praise,  
Altho thy Fame, so stablished, hath no need of praise,  
And thou thyself art very far away from us —  
So far, thou'dst not take heed of blame or heed of praise.
- " A score of zealous poets have translated thee  
In tongues unheard of when the Mollahs hated thee,  
And now accept their tribute, and this lay from us  
For whom thy living words have re-created thee ! "

## INTRODUCTION

Mr. John Payne, in his translation, published by the Villon Society, has also illustrated the remarkable construction of Omar's verses, but with less success than Mr. Dole. Indeed, while the Villon translation indicates a profound knowledge of Vedantic and Oriental lore, Mr. Payne's stanzas are sometimes but little short of astounding. For example the following ruba'i: —

انها كه نشنیده نییذ نایند  
 و انها كه بشنید همیشه در خوابند  
 بر خشک کسی نیست همه درآیند  
 نیدار یکمست دیگران در خوابند

is thus rendered: —

"Those who of sheer old wine, unmingled, drinkers deep  
   are,  
 And those who still a-nights in prayer-niche watch-a-keep  
   are,  
 Not one is on dry land, i' the water all a-heap are,  
 But one of them's awake, whilst t' others all asleep are."

Omar has had many translators, in many tongues, but Mr. Payne's verses are the most remarkable. They are written in rhyme and metre, but they are not poetry; they are marvellously literal, but they fail to convey the spirit; they are written by an evident master of prosody, but they are almost devoid of music: and yet, despite all its shortcomings, his long work of 845 quatrains bears the stamp of learning, experience, and industry.

In striking contrast to this version is the poem of Mr. FitzGerald. Its longest edition contains only 110 quatrains, of which less than half are translations, and the remainder

## INTRODUCTION

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inspired not only by Khayyam but by Hafiz, Jami, Attar, and others. Nevertheless, FitzGerald has, with the magic touch of genius, infused into the few quatrains which he has given us more of the spirit of Omar than all the other English translators combined. Careless of prosody, his work is full of music; an indifferent Persian scholar, he grasps the poet's meaning with marvellous intuition; with a magnificent disdain of the letter, he presents us with the kernel of the thought; and over the whole he throws the magic mantle of his own personality and talks to us in words that flow from the living depths of a poet's soul. In one point alone is he lacking, and that, indeed, is not by accident but by design, as he admits in a letter to Professor Cowell. The point, as I understand it, refers to the Vedantic doctrine of the ultimate reabsorption of the soul when freed from the world-figment or Maya of individuality, in the Brahman, or Impersonal Self of the Supreme Spirit. It is, however, because he has only lightly touched upon this belief in two quatrains, one of which appears to have been inspired by the Mantik-ut-Tair of Attar, that the chief *raison d'être* of the following work exists.

Whether the wine and love of which Omar sings are the wine and love of a sensual materialist, or whether they have a spiritual meaning, such as is generally the case in Sufi poetry, is a much debated question. It is highly probable, however, that they sometimes signify one thing, sometimes another, for written as they were at different periods and without reference to each other, the quatrains appear but to reflect the passing mood of the poet; sometimes they

## INTRODUCTION

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overflow with the vivacity of a strong animal vitality; sometimes they are full of thoughtful speculation and wonder; always, indeed, they are clever and epigrammatic, but often, also, do they tremble with a note of sorrow that verges on the very borderland of despair.

That Omar was, to a considerable extent, impregnated with the doctrines of the Sufis is indicated by many of his quatrains. Indeed it appears that the Aryan instincts of the more intelligent Persians led them to discard the Semitic materialism of Muhammad for a belief more profound and spiritual than anything their Arab conquerors could teach or appreciate. Thus it was that the Sufi doctrine arose, a pure pantheism that regarded God as an eternal spirit, without beginning and without end, — a spirit from which, at the beginning, our souls emanated and to which, in the end, they surely will return.

This doctrine, which was expounded by Plato to the Western world, and by the profoundest of Vedanta philosophers to ancient Hindustan, found a fertile soil among the thinking minds of Persia, who, impelled by their environment to an outward observance of Muhammadanism, nevertheless used it but as a cloak to cover the tenets of a purer and a loftier creed. Thus, while both Sufi and orthodox Muhammadan believed in the immortality of the soul, the former professed a belief in the final reabsorption of the individual spirit in the divine essence, while the latter looked forward to a material paradise where he could drink wine and rejoice himself with black-eyed houris, by the crystal waters of the River Kusar.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Moslem, filled with visions of a material heaven, more delightful to him than the prospect of a spiritual reunion with God, boldly faces death in the assurance of sensual pleasures that await him in Paradise; the Sufi, on the other hand, believes even Paradise to be a part of the Maya or illusion that he is seeking to escape, and though he may welcome death as a step toward the boundless sea of divine love for which he longs, oftentimes he cannot forbear a sigh of regret for the lovely world he is leaving. The spring breezes, the fragrant flowers, the pleasures of beauty and of love can scarce be forsaken without a passing shade of sorrow; but as the bride weeps for the friends she is leaving, yet feels a new joy within her heart, so the Sufi sighs farewell to the pleasures and beauty of the world and turns toward the source of his being in confidence and peace.

“Rejoice in the spring and be glad, for the roses will bloom when you are here no more,” sang Hafiz; but he knew that when the roses were blooming over his grave his soul might perchance be reabsorbed in the divine essence, for he has told us that

“The ocean of divine love is an ocean that hath no shore,  
In which we have no remedy but to yield up our souls [to God].”

So, too, our Omar has told us that the path of love will lead our souls till they are lost in the fountain of life. But Omar tells us many things which we cannot easily reconcile, for he is not the same Omar to-day that he was yesterday,

## INTRODUCTION

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and who knows in what vein we may find him to-morrow ! In one mood he bids us drink and rejoice, for soon shall we lie beneath the dust ; and in another he warns us not to sell the countless ages of eternity for the sake of earth's momentary pleasures. Now he rises in anger against the ruthless Heaven that has thrust him, helpless and unwilling, into a life whose weary struggles are ended only by death ; and now he turns lovingly to the eternal source of being and says that, knowing the secret of truth, he has no concern about a material heaven or hell. Sometimes agnostic, sometimes full of childlike faith ; now rebellious, and again in a little while filled with the spirit of gentle thankfulness, he is in all his moods so human, so like ourselves, that his words find an echo in every heart. And though in distant Nishapur he has been so long asleep, his voice comes to us down the ages, still vibrating with the energy and magnetism of life, for his words are never distant, affected, or cold, but always the honest outpourings of a living, human soul.

That the Sufis employed such terms as wine, beauty, and kisses to express religious devotion, the perfection of the Divine Being, and the raptures of piety, is undoubted ; but that they sometimes used them in a sense other than spiritual appears equally sure. In reading their poetry, therefore one must determine from the context whether the meaning is literal or spiritual, although it seems that the conclusions thus reached are often dependent upon the individual temperament of the reader rather than upon the exercise of an unbiased critical faculty. It would be well, however, to bear in mind that one of the greatest among them has told

## INTRODUCTION

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us how "they profess eager desire, but with no carnal affection, and circulate the cup, but no material goblet; since all things are spiritual in their sect, all is mystery within mystery."

The eight concluding quatrains, which are not properly a part of this translation, were suggested by Mr. FitzGerald's version, and have been retained only because they afford an easy method of indicating, by marginal references, some of the sources of his charming *Kuza Nama*.

Where Omar plays upon words, as for example where جَان (jan), the soul, جَام (jam), a cup, and جَامَا (jama), a garment, all occur in the same line, I have generally resorted to the clumsy expedient of a footnote. Also where the point of a verse depends upon the position of a single dot, as in quatrain 93, mere translation would be a totally inadequate method of conveying the meaning.

To this latter form of word-play the Arabic alphabet readily lends itself; hence, in Persian, by merely altering the position of a dot, the meaning of many words may be changed. So it happens that a trifling change of position will convert a neighbor جَار (jar) into a thorn خَار (khar) and cause *crime* جُرْم (jurm) to become *delightful* خُرْم (khurram), while the addition of a dot will convert *the seas* بَحَار (bihar) into *vapor* بُخَار (bukhar), or transform *the solution of a problem* حَل (hall) into *the sail of a ship* جَل (jall); if the position of the dot be changed, however, so that جَل (jall) reads خَل (khal), *the ship's sail* will be converted into *vinegar*. The footnotes treating of these and other matters were originally much more copious, but I thought it wise



## INTRODUCTION

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to reduce them when I recollected a story of an old Scotch lady who, after having praised in high terms the clearness of a certain work, added ingenuously that she "hoped, with a mickle mair study, to understand the explanatory notes of the editor."

Working far from the great libraries of the world, it has not been possible for me to verify all the right-hand marginal references. Most of them have been made upon the authority of Mr. Whinfield's edition of 1883 and have been verified as far as possible by comparison with other reproductions, while the remainder are the result of my own investigations.

I desire, also, to acknowledge the assistance I have received from the works of Mr. FitzGerald, Mr. Heron-Allen, Mr. Nathan Haskell Dole, and others, and to express my thanks to those friends whose severe but kindly criticism has been warmly appreciated.

GEORGE ROE.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS,  
September, 1, 1906.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Bod., Bodensiedt's German Translation; Breslau, A.D. 1889.  
 Cad., J. E. Cadell's English Translation; John Lane, London and New York, 1899.  
 F.G., II, Second Edition of FitzGerald's English Translation; London, A.D. 1868.  
 F.G., V, Fifth " " " " " " 1890.  
 Gar., Garner's American Translation; Philadelphia, A.D. 1897.  
 H.A., Heron-Allen's English Translation of Ouseley MS.; London, 1898.  
 H.P., Von Hammer-Purgstall's German Translation, "Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens," pages 80-83; Vienna, 1818.  
 McC., McCarthy's English Translation; London, A.D. 1889.  
 N., French Translation of Nicolas; Paris, 1867.  
 P., Pizzi's Italian Translation, "Storia della Poesia Persiana," Vol. I, pages 280-286; Turin, 1894.  
 Vill., Payne's Translation, published by the Villon Society; London, 1898.  
 Von S., Von Shack's German Translation; Stuttgart, A.D. 1878.  
 W., Whinfield's English Translation; London, A.D. 1883.
- A, MS. formerly in possession of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta; now either lost or stolen.  
 B, Ouseley MS., in Bodleian Library, Oxford.  
 C, Calcutta Printed Edition of A.D. 1836.  
 D, India Office MS., No. 2420.  
 E, " " No. 2486.  
 F, Lucknow Lithograph.  
 G, Edition of Nicolas, copied from Teheran Lithograph.  
 H, Whinfield's Persian Text; A.D. 1883.

**A N O D E T O O M A R**

# AN ODE TO OMAR

---

## I

**K**HAYYÁM, old friend, although so long asleep  
In distant Nishapúr, where roses heap  
Their petals o'er thy grave, how oft I hear  
Thy living voice re-echo o'er the deep !

## 2

From Breslau's gates, Vienna's spacious halls,  
Or where Turin uprears her hoary walls,  
In deep Germanic chaunt, or dulcet lay,  
The subtle singer of Khorásán calls.

## 3

Through Albion's isle and o'er the Western main,  
In streams of lofty music, hark the strain  
Of mystic numbers sung by thee of old,  
And now, by other lips, oft sung again.

## 4

Not thine to scatter bricks along the sea,  
Not thine such tasks of vain idolatry ;  
Methinks, e'en now, I hear thy living tongue  
Scathe shallow priest and canting Pharisee : —

5

“O poor blind teacher, who would lead the blind  
To things beyond the ken of mortal mind,  
Priest, mystic, scholar — or whate’er you be —  
First seek the mystery, yourself, — and find.

6

“Or know you where the end of space may lie?  
Or where the limits of eternity?  
Or what is space, or universe, or God?  
Or why you live, or wherefore you must die?”

7

Alas, thy spirit, fearless of the rage  
And thoughtless fury of a bigot age,  
Like lesser spirits, long has passed away  
To hidden scenes behind this mortal stage.

8

For still the same eternal law appears  
That ruled creation through the bygone years,  
That shaped the pathway of each speck of dust,  
And traced the courses of the heavenly spheres.

## AN ODE TO OMAR

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### 9

Thus pow'r and wisdom reach their lowly bed,  
And shah, like peasant, joins the countless dead ;  
Nor thinks of him who mounts the empty throne,  
Nor heeds the feet that trample o'er his head.

### 10

And lo, the spot where mighty sultans sate,  
Yon lofty pile where Jamshyd held his state,  
Where nobles feasted and where beauty smiled,  
Behold the crumbling wall, the fallen gate !

### 11

Through yon dim corridor the vampire\* flits,  
'Neath yon bleak tow'r the busy spider knits  
Her crafty trap, the dismal night-owl hoots,  
And o'er the wasting dome the vulture sits !

### 12

For death must visit, silent and alone,  
The humble cot, the sultan's lofty throne ;  
And while we ponder what the riddle means,  
The life we ponder is already gone.

\* The true vampire is found only in South America, but the bats that infest the cave-temples and ancient ruins of India are generally known as vampires to Anglo-Indians.

13

And so Khayyám, old friend, thou couldst not stay;  
And ah, how often have I heard thee say—  
“Not one returns to count the journey o’er;  
The flow’r that dies is ever passed away!”

14

I’ll strive not, then, the mystery to sift—  
Fast roll the years, the sands of life run swift—  
But quaff the bowl, hail beauty with a kiss,  
And leave the veil for coming death to lift.

15

And yet, perchance, — what mortal thing can say, —  
That wondrous soul that lived within thy clay  
And gave it pow’r to think and feel and love,  
Hath vanquished death and triumphed o’er decay.

16

And as, at night, when darkness first descends,  
When evening’s veil o’er all the earth extends,  
The vanished stars again bedeck the sky,  
And shimm’ring light from Heaven’s vault depends;

17

Or when, near dawn, behind the pearly gray  
And rosy streaks that herald coming day,  
The sun returns, in crimson glory clad,  
So shall thy soul return,—perchance it may.

18

Perchance to Nature's fount fled back thy soul,  
Where seas of love, in endless billows, roll; \*—  
Perchance within the Source of Life 't was merged,  
And lost again amidst the Mighty Whole.

19

A cup awaits us at the river's brink,  
Where souls are freed from Earth's enslaving link;  
And when the radiant angel, kindly Death,  
Invites our souls, we shall not fear to drink.

20

But swift as rain-drops to the ocean fall,  
We soon shall join thee at the angel's call,  
And thou and we shall all be merged in God,—  
The Source, the Stay, the final End of All.

\*Compare Hafiz:—

The ocean of divine love is boundless;  
We have no remedy but to yield up our souls.

[ 25 ]



**RUBA'İYAT OF OMAR KHAYYĀ'M**

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., IX, 28 Gar., VI, 2 McC., 146 N., 255 Vill., 515 W., 295</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Lo, dawn is rending night's dark veil in twain ; Arise ! Arise ! and morning's goblet drain ; Drive grief away, for many a rosy morn Will seek us here, and seek us long in vain.</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., X, 1 Gar., I, 1 McC., 419 N., 426 Vill., 819 Von S., 224 W., 463</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>And know ye why the herald of the day,* With clarion voice, peals forth his morning lay? "Behold," he cries, "the mirror of the dawn ; A precious night again has slipped away !"</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>F. G., V, 1 Gar., I, 2 Vill., 242 W., 233</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Now wakes Khurshýd† on yonder flaming height, And o'er the city flings a robe of light;</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, H</p>

2

\* خمر سحر (khurus-i-sahar), the morning cock

3

† خورشید (khurshýd), the sun.

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Cad., 6  
Gar., I, 6  
H. A., 7  
McC., 45  
N., 19  
Vill., 28  
Von S., 41  
W., 22

6

Elate I stand beside the fallen door,\*  
My raiment pawned; heart, soul, and  
cup paid o'er; †  
And, flushed with wine, I know nor  
hope nor fear;  
O'er fire and water, earth and air I  
soar.

A, B, C, D,  
E, F, G, H

Bod., VI, 2  
Cad., 40  
F. G., V, 4  
Gar., II, 1  
H. A., 13  
Vill., 454  
W., 116

7

But lo, without, the year is young  
and fair,\*  
And yearning hearts to stilly meads  
repair;

B, H

Sir William Jones admirably illustrates the difference between the unassimilated Arabic of the Persian and the assimilated Latin of the English, by quoting a passage from Middleton's *Life of Cicero* and rewriting the passage with many of the words in their unmodified Latin form after the manner of Arabic words used in Persia. The quotation illustrating the English structure reads:

"The true law is right reason conformable to the nature of things, which calls us to duty by commanding, deters us from sin by forbidding."

The Persian method is shewn thus: —

"The true *lex* is *recta ratio* conformable *naturæ*, which by commanding *vocet ad officium*, by forbidding a *fraude deterreat*."

## 6

\* **كنج خراب** (*kunj-i-kharāb*) is, literally, a corner of desolation. The Persian taverns were generally situated in desolate corners or in the ruins upon the outskirts of a town.

† Note the resemblance of the words **جان** (*jan*), the soul; **جام** (*jam*), a cup; and **جامه** (*jama*), a garment; all of which occur in the same line.

## 7

\* **بکھوشی داسترسی** (*bakhushi dastrasi*) is, literally, a means of happiness; Spring.

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

5

Bod., I, 17  
Cad., 103  
F. G., V, 77  
H. A., 2  
McC., 87  
N., 222  
Vill., 465  
Von S., 17  
W., 262

And better far, with Thee, in taverns  
learn,  
Than in the temple from Thy visage  
turn.\*  
Oh, First and Last of all creation  
Thou,†  
Whate'er Thou wilt, or cherish me  
or burn.

A, B, C, D,  
E, F, G, H

into darkness until the sun reaches the crest of the mountain and brings with it the True Dawn, or Suhhi Sadik.

Compare Milton:—

“Ere the babbling Eastern scout,  
The nice morn on th' Indian steep,  
From the cabin'd loop-hole peep.”

Vide page 107, Waring's “Tour to Sheeraz,” London, 1807.

The ancient Persians believed that the earth was flat and encircled by Mount Kaf; thus Rumi writes of the “world-encircling Kaf.”

5

\* i.e., “Repeat the *nemaz* at the *mihrab* without Thee.”

The *nemaz* are prayers which Muhammadans are enjoined to repeat five times daily.

The *mihrab* is a praying-niche in a mosque, showing the direction of Mecca, toward which the worshipper turns.

† *أول* و *آخر* (Awwal u Akhar). Compare Revelation XXII, 13: “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.”

Arabic words like *أول* and *آخر* were introduced into Persia by the Moslem conquerors, as words of Latin origin were introduced into England by the Normans. There is this great difference, however,—the English have assimilated the Latin and made it a part of their own language, while Arabic words and phrases introduced into Persia have not only largely retained their own forms, but have, by force of example, given Arabic inflections to many Persian words. Thus *ruba'i* becomes in the plural *ruba'iyat*, and *navishtah* becomes *navishtajat*, instead of retaining the Persian plural in *ha*. Latin words used in English, however, generally take the English inflection, while even those words which still retain the Latin termination often admit also of the English form.

[ 31 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Cad., 87 H. A., 82 Vill., 275 W., 210</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p>The morning dews bedeck the tulip's face, The violets bend their heads with timid grace, And fairer still, the rosebud's pet- all'd veil Shields blushing cheek from Zeph- yr's soft embrace.</p>	<p>B, F, H</p>
<p>Bod., VIII, 23 Cad., 60 F. G., V, 6 H. A., 67 N., 153 Vill., 294 Von S., 284 W., 174</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p>Nor warm, nor cold, the day dawns bright and fair, The rain-kissed flow'rs perfume the morning air ; And hark ! in Pahlavi * the bulbul † trills — “ Come, drooping † rose, this dewy vintage share.”</p>	<p>B, F, G, H</p>

## 10

\* Pahlavi was the language of the ancient Persians, in which, it was said, the nightingale continued to sing. Mr. FitzGerald calls it “the old heroic Sanscrit,” but it is, in reality, the name applied to the ancient Zoroastrian writings. Very many of its words were written in a form that gave no clue to their pronunciation, Persian words being represented by Semitic equivalents and these equivalents being pronounced and inflected like Persian, as when we write for the English word *pound* the Latin word *libra*, contracted into *lb.*, but give it the English pronunciation *pound* and the English inflection by writing the plural *lbs.*

Perhaps it was partly because Firdusi drew the themes of his great poem “The Shah Namah” from the ancient Pahlavi records, that his countrymen attributed so sweet a melody to this old Persian tongue.

† Bulbul, the nightingale.

‡ زرد (zard) = yellow, fallow, pallid ; — hence, sickly, drooping.

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>McC., 4 Vill., 608 W., 352</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11</p> <p>Then sings the rose, "As Yusuf's * flower I reign ; Come touch my lips and jewelled kisses gain." "Oh, lovely flow'r, then where is Yusuf's sign ?" "Behold, my silken robe with blood- red stain."</p>	<p>F, H</p>
<p>Cad., 51 F.G., V, 19 Gar., IV, 6 H.A., 43 H.P., 16 Vill., 109 Von S., 101 W., 104</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">12</p> <p>O'er beauty's grave the gentle zephyr blows, From beauty's cheek the blue-eyed violet grows ; And see, where royal crimson stained the sod, The flaming tulip blossoms near the rose.*</p>	<p>A, B, F, H Whinfield does not give A</p>

## 11

\* Yusuf (Joseph) has been called the Adonis of the Persians. He was considered the type of manly beauty.

## 12

- \* "Everywhere that a rose and a tulip bed hath been,  
From the crimson blood of a king hath it been ;  
Every violet that grows from the earth  
Is a mole that upon the cheek of a beauty hath been."

This stanza has been rendered by Ralph Waldo Emerson thus:—

"Each spot where tulips prank their state  
Has drunk the life-blood of the great ;  
The violets yon field which stain  
Are moles of beauties, Time hath slain."

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Cad., 47 H. A., 32 Vill., 105	<p style="text-align: center;">13</p> <p>When Springtime * wafts her per- fumes o'er the lea, By river's brink, with playmates fond and free,† I pledge my love in morning's joyful bowl, And what is mosque or synagogue to me !</p>	B, F
Bod., II, 19 McC., 267 N., 169 Vill., 300 Von S., 97 Compare Cad., 48 F. G., V, 13 and 62 H. A., 34 H. P., 22 W., 94 and 108	<p style="text-align: center;">14</p> <p>Some talk of Heav'n, where streams like Kusar * flow, And houris dwell, and golden vine- yards grow ; But fill my cup and give me beauty here, Ah, give them now, and let the promise go !</p>	A, G

13

\* فصل گُل (Fasl-i-gul) = In time of roses ; hence, Springtime.

† Lit., With one, two, three young playmates like houris. (Lucknow Litho.)

14

\* The Kusar is a stream in Paradise. Vide Koran, chapter entitled "The Kusar." Compare Hafiz :—

فردا شراب گوز و خردار برای ما  
و امروز نازش و روی و جام می

"To-morrow the waters of the Kusar and a houri await me ;  
And to-day I enjoy a beautiful mistress and a cup of wine."

[ 36 ]

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

	15	
Bod., X, 16 F.G., V, 12 Gar., I, 8 H. A., 149 McC., 449 N., 413 Vill., 829 Von S., 125 W., 452	A book * of verses underneath the vine, A loaf of bread, a jug of ruby wine, And thou beside me, resting in the wild, Would make the dreary wilderness divine! †	B, G, H
	16	
Bod., IX, 88 Cad., 135 F.G., V, 41 H. A., 118 McC., 283 N., 294 P., 47 Vill., 611 Von S., 87 W., 332	See, morning dawns; the rosy cup retain, And smash the crystal of repute again; Thy lute is sweet, thy tresses soft as down, — Ah, Heav'n is here, and future glory vain.*	B, F, G, H

15

\* **ديوان**, a diwan, is a collection of stanzas arranged in alphabetical order, the position of each being determined by the final letter of its rhyme-word.

†

کوشتر بود از سلک سلاطین

Lit., Is pleasanter than the realm of a sultan.

16

\* The lines

دست از امید دراز خرد باز گشیم  
فرولف دراز و داسی جنگ زبیم

signify:—

Let us renounce our hopes of Paradise,  
And toy with long, curling tresses and the fringe of the lute.

[ 37 ]



# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Cad., 43 H. A., 17 Vill., 189 W., 112 Compare F. G., V, 21</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">17</p> <p>Sweet is the breeze that gently fans the rose; Sweet, in the shade, to watch thy face repose : Oh, tell me not that yesterday was sweet! To-day is sweet! To-morrow—ah, who knows?*</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, H</p>
<p>Cad., 52 F. G., V, 8 Gar., I, 17 H. A., 47 McC., 148 N., 105 Vill., 236 and 237 Von S., 201 W., 134</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">18</p> <p>Whether at Balkh or Babylon,* we die; † Or sweet or bitter, soon the cup runs dry; Come drink, my love, for many a silver moon Will wax again and wane, where'er we lie.</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

17

“To-morrow—ah, who knows?” is an interpolation of the translator, which he believes other passages will justify. Vide quatrains 12 and 126, Ouseley MS.

The best translation of this quatrain that has yet been made is probably the following, which was written for the Omar Khayyam Club of America by Mr. N. H. Dole:—

“The breath of the early spring in the face of the Rose is sweet;  
The face of my Love in the shade of the garden-close is sweet;  
Naught thou canst say of the day that has faded away is sweet;  
Be happy; speak not of the past, for to-day as it glows is sweet!”

18

\* Nicolas and Whinfield read Nishapur, and the Ouseley MS., Baghdad. Babylon is here substituted for the sake of euphony, and because it is often used as a synonym for Baghdad in Oriental poetry.

† The Ouseley MS. reads چون عمر مني رود “since life passes”; but

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Cad., 55 H. A., 52 McC., 212 N., 112 Vill., 357</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">19</p> <p>And love's bright path is but the road to naught,* Where Fate's rude talons have de- struction wrought; Oh lovely saki,† water ere I die, And this poor dust again to dust be brought!</p>	<p>A, B, F, G</p>
<p>Bod., IX, 49 Cad., 16 Gar., VIII, 6 H. A., 27 McC., 67 N., 48 P., 11 Vill., 196 Von S., 130 W., 51</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">20</p> <p>I lay upon my couch in slumber deep,* And Wisdom cried aloud, "Oh, wherefore sleep? For sleep is kin to death; drink while you may; Eternal slumber hastens o'er the steep!"</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

Whinfield's text has a more beautiful phrase, *چون جان بلب آید* "Since the soul comes to the lips."

## 19

\* The spiritual meaning of the first two lines is, that the path of divine love leads to the annihilation of the individual soul; that we shall be destroyed in the talons of doom ( *تاج* ), when the existence of the individual is merged in the divine fountain of universal life. Vide Introduction.

† Saki, cup-bearer.

## 20

\* The second line, which is omitted in the translation, is literally:—

"Never from sleep has the rose of joy bloomed for any one."

[ 39 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

	21	
Bod., V, 1 Cad., 11 F.G., V, 71 Gar., VII, 1 H. A., 31 McC., 86 N., 31 Vill., 191 W., 35	Ere yet the dawn of Azal * shed its light O'er dreary chaos and the realms of night, The Pen, unmoved by good and evil, wrote; Nor grief can change, nor endless toil rewrite.	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H
	22	
Bod., V, 8 Cad., 32 F.G., V, 72 Gar., VII, 3 H. A., 41 McC., 39 N., 95 Vill., 79 Von S., 83 W., 96	And ev'ry sorrow, all our passing mirth, Was long predestined, ere creation's birth; But blame not Heav'n, for all is fore- ordained, And Heav'n more helpless than the helpless earth.	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H W. does not give B
	23	
Bod., V, 38 F.G., V, 10 McC., 390 N., 416 Vill., 798 W., 455	All fearless, then, while mortal frame shall be, Stand firm within the bounds of destiny;	A, C, D, E, F, G, H

## 21

\* Jf (Azal) signifies "eternity without beginning." Whinfield and Nicolas, however, read اندر تقدیر (Andar takdir) "in destiny," for در روز (Dar ruz-i-Azal) "on the day of eternity without beginning," as appears in the Ouseley MS.

The opposite of Azal (Jf) is Abad (دائم), which signifies "eternity without end."

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

	<p>Yield naught to foe, though Rustam, son of Zal,* Nor take from friend, though Hatim Tai † were he.</p>	
	24	
<p>Cad., 89 Gar., VII, 5 H. A., 54 Compare F.G., V, 71</p>	<p>For what is written, be it long or brief, Remains the same, nor tears can give relief; No drop of destiny is less nor more, Though naught you know but life- long pain and grief.</p>	B
	25	
<p>Bod., VII, 4 Cad., 30 F.G., V, 13 Gar., XII, 5 H. A., 40</p>	<p>I know not what the Lord hath made my share, The joy of Heav'n—the Hell of deep despair;*</p>	A, B, C, D, F, G, H

23

\* Zal, a hero who lived in the reign of Kai Kawus.

Rustam, a mighty warrior who, with his famous horse, Rukhsb, rescued Kai Kawus from a fortress-prison guarded by a hundred demons. The exploits of Zal and Rustam are sung by Firdusi in his great historical poem, the Shah Namah.

† Hatim Tai, a generous Arab prince.

25

\* Nicolas reads *بود اهل بهشت خوب* (bud ahl bihisht khub) instead of *از اهل بهشت گشت* (az ahl bihisht guft) as appears in the Ouseley MS., and this changes the meaning from "I know not whether He who moulded me, destined me to dwell in Heaven or horrible Hell," to "I know not whether He who moulded me was a dweller in Heaven or horrible Hell."

[41]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

McC., 314  
N., 92  
P., 19  
Vill., 89  
Von S., 245  
W., 94

But wine and beauty fill me with  
delight,  
And Earth is here, and Paradise is  
— where?†

## 26

Bod., IV, 1  
Cad., 14  
H. A., 29  
McC., 19  
N., 44  
Vill., 60  
Von S., 110  
W., 47

The secret's hidden from the mortal  
eye,  
Nor living soul can read the mystery;  
Save in the heart of earth, we have  
no rest;  
So fill the bowl, 'twill soon be time  
to die.\*

A, B, C, D,  
E, F, G, H

## 27

Cad., 45  
H. A., 18  
Vill., 208  
W., 111

How long shall I throw bricks upon  
the sea?‡  
I scorn such tricks of vain idolatry!  
Say not Khayyám is surely doomed  
to Hell.  
Who knows of Hell, or Heav'n, or if  
they be?†

A, B, C, D,  
E, F, H

† This line is a paraphrase for "These are cash to me; let thine be the credit, Heaven."

## 26

\* Lit. Drink wine, for such fables are not short.

## 27

\* i. e. "How long shall I perform empty ceremonies?" H. A.

† Heron-Allen reads: "Who ever went to Hell, and who ever came from Heaven?"

Whinfield, however, reads: "One while in Heaven, and one in Hell is he."

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

	28	
Bod., IV, 8 F.G., V, 56 McC., 276 N., 165 Vill., 295 Von S., 270 W., 183	And oh, how long engrossed in self remain ? How long o'er futile problems * strive in vain ? The path of life but leads thee to the grave; So drink and dream, and dream and drink again.	A, C, D, E, F, G, H
	29	
Cad., 114 H. A., 102 H. P., 11 McC., 85 N., 242 Vill., 493 Von S., 105 W., 282	And when thou hast some ruby wine, rejoice ; Or canst in beauty's arms recline, rejoice ; Since all that is, must surely end in naught, Think thou art naught while life is thine, rejoice.	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H
	30	
Bod., IV, 9 Cad., 65 H. A., 72 McC., 266	No mind has solved the tangled mys- tery, Nor passed the orbit * of eternity ; †	A, C, D, E, F, G, H

28

\* The problems of existence and non-existence.

30

\* دَائِرَة (dairah) = orbit.

Whinfield reads نِهَاد (nihad) nature, meaning that no one has set foot beyond the bounds of his own nature.

† In line نَسْ سَكَلِ اسْرَارِ اَزْ رَا عَشَاد note the accusative termination ي affixed to the genitive case of the word اَزْ (azal-ra).

[ 43 ]

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

N., 175  
Vill., 356  
Von S., 239  
W., 190

The teacher and the tyro both are  
blind,  
And grope amid the darkness help-  
lessly.

31

Bod., IX, 100  
Gar., XII, 3  
McC., 329  
N., 430  
Vill., 835  
W., 465

But though you reach Aristo's lofty  
plane,\*  
Or o'er imperial Rome, like Caesar,  
reign,  
Drain Jamshyd's cup, your end must  
be the grave  
Though Bahram's self; dust turns to  
dust again.

G, H

32

Bod., X, 29  
Gar., I, 35  
McC., 315  
N., 455  
Vill., 764  
Von S., 246  
W., 484

'Tis dawn, oh friend of joyful foot,  
draw nigh;  
Fill high the bowl, salute the rosy  
sky.  
From Tyr to Dai\* the months re-  
morseless roll  
And drag to death e'en mighty Jam †  
and Kai. ‡

A, C, D, F,  
G, H

31

\* In the text, Jamhur is coupled with Aristo as an example of wisdom; and Faghfur, emperor of China, with Caesar, as an example of power.

† Compare Firdusi's line, *نه تهر بهرام نه قتلوز حسن*, in which Faghfur and Caesar are similarly coupled.

32

\* From Tyr to Dai = From April to December,

† Jam, or Jamshyd, said to have been the founder of Persepolis.

‡ Kai, or Kai Khosru, generally identified with Cyrus.

[ 44 ]

# RUBAI'YAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

<p>Bod., IX, 57 McC., 149 N., 68 Vill., 201 W., 71</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">33</p> <p>When flow'rs of joy with sparkling petals shine, Why shun the crystal cup of ruby wine? Time knows no mercy,* drink, ere yet too late; A day like this may ne'er again be thine.</p>	<p>A. C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., VIII, 50 McC., 377 N., 334 Vill., 666 Von S., 124 Compare W., 278</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">34</p> <p>And why lament what cannot come again? Why think of morrow, when such thoughts are vain? Seize fast to-day, ere all its joys go by As summer breezes vanish o'er the plain.</p>	<p>G</p>
<p>Bod., IX, 62 Cad., 26 F.G., V, 74 Gar., XIII, 12 H. A., 26 McC., 180 N., 85 Vill., 188 Von S., 207 W., 87</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">35</p> <p>Soon shall you bid farewell to mortal tie; Soon shall you read life's deepest mystery. Drink, for you know not when you go, nor where; Drink, for you know not whence you came, nor why.*</p>	<p>A. B, C, D, F, G, H</p>

\* Lit. Time is a treacherous foe.

35

\* I am indebted for the last two lines to Mr. FitzGerald, who has combined this quatraine with No. 152 of the Ouseley MS.



# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., V, 18 F.G., V, 27 Gar., XII, 1 McC., 40 N., 225 Vill., 467 Von S., 143 W., 264</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">36</p> <p>When, like a hawk, to dizzy heights I soar, And fain would read and con the myst'ries o'er, No guide I find and back to Earth I fall, And leave and enter by the self-same door.</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Cad., 141 F.G., V, 28 Gar., XII, 13 H. A., 121 Vill., 584 Von S., 183 W., 353</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">37</p> <p>And oft, when young, from teachers I designed To fill with wisdom's lore my youth- ful mind ; But lo, the end of all their lofty themes : — We came like water * and depart like wind.</p>	<p>B, F, H</p>
<p>H. A. 157 McC., 317 N., 450 Vill., 785 Von S., 33 W., 490</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">38</p> <p>Unwilling, helpless, hurried through life's door, And, helpless, whither, when the dream is o'er ?</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

37

\* Whinfield reads از خاک (az khak), from earth, instead of چون آب (chun ab), like water, as appears in the Ouseley MS.

[ 46 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

Ah, better far to Earth I ne'er had  
come  
Than come, live, go, — and taste of  
life no more ! \*

39

Then oh, my soul, why on this dust  
bestow

The wretched boon of life, the pain,  
the woe

And all the passions that possess  
mankind,

To leave it dust again whene'er you  
go ?

40

This spirit, freed from mortal bonds,  
could soar

Back through the realms of space to  
Heaven's door ;

Its proper home lies o'er the azure  
sky,

And shame it was to touch this earthly  
shore.

A, C, D, E,  
F, G, H

A, B, C, D,  
F, G, H

38

\* Compare Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, lines 502-507 :—

“ Better end here unborn. Why is life given  
To be wrested from us ? Rather why  
Obtruded on us thus ? Who, if we knew  
What we receive, would either not accept  
Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down,  
Glad to be so dismissed in peace ? ”

[ 47 ]

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., I, 31 Cad., 42 F.G., V, 66 H.A., 15 Vill., 58 Von S., 335 W., 114</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">41</p> <p>When life first dawned * high o'er this mortal cell, † Long sought my soul where Pen and Tablet ‡ dwell, Sought Hell and Heav'n, and heard the Master say — “Behold, within thyself, the heav'n and hell !” §</p>	<p>B, F, H</p>
<p>Bod., III, 10 Cad., 28 F.G., V, 67 Gar., X, 6 H.A., 33 McC., 98 N., 90 Vill., 195 Von S., 269 W., 92</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">42</p> <p>Heav'n is the tranquil joy of inward rest, And Hell, the anguish of a soul dis- tress'd ; The azure sky is but the robe we wear, And Jihun's * flood, the tears of hearts oppress'd.</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

41

\* روزی نخست (ruz-i-nukhust) is literally “on the day of the beginning.”

† مرتفع و سیهتر (bartar 'z sipihr) = higher than the sphere.

‡ لوح و قلم (luh u kalam) are the pen and the tablet with which the decrees of Fate were said to have been written.

§ Lit. Tablet and pen and heaven and hell are within thee.

Compare the following lines of Rumi:—

“The sev'nth earth I travers'd—the sev'nth heav'n explor'd,  
But in neither discern'd I the Court of the Lord !  
I questioned the Pen and the Tablet of Fate,  
But they whispered not where He pavilions His state ;  
My vision I strain'd, but my God-scanning eye  
No trace, that to Godhead belongs, could descry.  
My glance I bent inward, within my own breast,  
Lo, the vainly sought elsewhere! the Godhead confess'd !”

Translation by Prof. F. Falconer in the Asiatic Journal, quoted by Mr. Duncan Forbes.

42

\* Jihun, the River Oxus.

[ 48 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., VIII, 5 F.G., V, 17 Gar., V, 3 McC., 140 N., 67 Vill., 199 Von S., 48 W., 70</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">43</p> <p>And Earth is but a caravanserai, A resting place of fleeting night and day, The remnant of a feast, where Jam- shyd sate, The tomb* of many a Bahram passed away.</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Cad., 37 F.G., V, 30 H. A., 21 Vill., 94 Von S., 146 W., 110</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">44</p> <p>Thrust into life without my own consent, Thrust back to death, with who knows what intent? Arise, bright saki, fill the cup with wine And drown the burden of my dis- content.</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, H</p>
<p>Bod., I, 13 Gar., VIII, 14 McC., 70 N., 50 Vill., 68 Von S., 135 W., 53</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">45</p> <p>And on that day when Heav'n is rent in twain, And stars grow dim, and shining planets wane, I'll seize the Master by the robe and cry: — "Why cast us thus from life to death again?"</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

43

\* Whinfield reads *گور* (gur), *the tomb*, while the Calcutta MS. reads *قصر* (kasr), *the palace*. I have followed Mr. Whinfield's reading because the use of the word *gur*, which was also Bahram's surname, is a play upon words after Omar's own heart.

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

	46	
Bod., V, 36 F.G., V, 97 Gar., II, 7 McC., 440 N., 400 Vill., 820 Von S., 170 W., 442	<p>Ah, would this earth did yield a place of rest To pilgrims by the long, long road oppress'd, Whence, after many a year, we might return, As trampled flow'rs return from Na- ture's breast !</p>	A, C, D, E, G, H
	47	
Bod., II, 10 Cad., 3 Gar., I, 23 H.A., 6 McC., 24 N., 11 Vill., 20 Von S., 141 W., 10	<p>Men call the Koran "Fount of Sacred Lore," "The Word Supreme," and, hasty, glance it o'er ; But on the goblet's rim a text is writ * That all shall read and ponder ever- more.</p>	A, B, D, E, F, G, H
	48	
Bod., IV, 2 F.G., V, 53 McC., 69 N., 49 Vill., 77 Von S., 23 W., 52	<p>And if your heart life's secret only knew, Then, knowing death, 't would know God's secret too ; If, living, you know naught, what will you know When death has come and you 're no longer you ?</p>	A, C, D, F, G, H

47


\* **آية** (ayat) may mean either a mark, such as was used on a goblet for measuring, or a verse from the Koran.

[ 50 ]


# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

	49	
Bod., VIII, 9 F.G., V, 47 Gar., XIII, 8 McC., 210 N., 123 P., 23 Vill., 395 Von S., 296 W., 150	<p>But earth shall roll, as long it rolled before</p> <p>Our names were lost, our footprints all grown o'er ;</p> <p>'T was long completed ere we touched its soil,</p> <p>And when we're gone 't will be no less nor more.</p>	G, H
	50	
Bod., VIII, 13 F.G., V, 46 Gar., VIII, 5 McC., 235 N., 137 Vill., 397 Von S., 290 W., 161	<p>Khayyám, although this canopy of blue</p> <p>Veils all the myst'ries from your mortal view,</p> <p>Know this, th' eternal saki oft hath seen</p> <p>In life's deep cup a myriad things * like you.</p>	G, H
	51	
F.G., V, 70 H. P., 25 Vill., 682 Von S., 116 W., 401	<p>Naught speaks the ball, but right or left it goes,</p> <p>As Fate's relentless mallet* strikes the blows ;</p>	A, C, D, E, F, H

50

\*  (hubáb) is, literally, a bubble.

51

\*  (chugan) is the mallet used in the game of chugan, or polo.

[ 51 ]

	<p>But He who toss'd thee to the game's mad rush † He knows the reason, aye, He knows, He knows — ! ‡</p>	
	52	
<p>Bod., I, 12 F.G., V, 34 Gar., XI, 5 McC., 226 N., 204 Vill., 448 Von S., 235 W., 247</p>	<p>And Thou whom all creation fain would find, The waters speak Thy name, the whisp'ring wind ; But all are deaf ; Thy face is ever near, But none, alas, can see, for all are blind !</p>	G, H
	53	
<p>Bod., V, 19 Cad., 108 F.G., V, 69 Gar., VII, 4 H. A., 94 McC., 61 N., 231 Vill., 480 Von S., 144 W., 270</p>	<p>Like helpless chessmen on the check- ered blocks, We're hither, thither moved, till Heaven knocks The luckless pieces from the crowded board, And one by one returns them to the box.</p>	B, F, G, H

† **دور** , **دور** (tag u pu) is the racing and searching after the ball.

The Calcutta MS. reads **دور** , **دور** (tag u du), the racing and galloping.

‡ The last line has a weird sound, not unlike the notes of the wood pigeon at nightfall, thus:—

U danad, U danad, U danad, U—! breaking off suddenly upon the personal pronoun U.

(He knows, He knows, He knows, He—!)

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Vill., 137 W., 123	<p style="text-align: center;">54</p> <p>And oh, what hearts the cruel Wheel hath crushed ! How many a flower the hand of steel hath crushed ! Nor youth, my son, nor beauty can avail — Full many a bud the ruthless heel hath crushed.</p>	F, H
Bod., VI, 4 F.G., V, 96 Gar., IV, 4 McC., 223 N., 128 P., 25 Vill., 334 Von S., 62 W., 155	<p style="text-align: center;">55</p> <p>And now the page of life is scar and rent, The blossoms fade and fall, the spring is spent ; Ah, lovely bird of youth, so quickly gone, I marked not when you came nor when you went.</p>	A, C, D, F, G, H
Cad., 39 F.G., V, 24 and 63 H. A., 35 Vill., 184	<p style="text-align: center;">56</p> <p>So fill the bowl, swift passes life's brief day, And oh ! th' eternal bed of chilly clay ! *</p>	A, B, C, D, E, H

56

\* Lit. "Drink wine, for thou wilt sleep long beneath the clay." 35, however, may be read *gil* or *gul*, and hence may signify either *clay* or *roses*, the meaning being dependent upon the accent. Whinfield's text and Heron-Allen's transcript of the Ouseley MS. have the accent *Kasra*, and thus make it *clay*. The Ouseley MS. itself, however, has no accent; while the Calcutta MS. has the accent *Zamma*, which would make it *roses*.

[ 53 ]



# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

W., 107  
Compare  
Von S., 315  
and 198

No friend, no song, no wine, no  
love, — ! †  
The flow'r that dies is ever passed  
away.

57

F.G., V, 16  
Vill., 443  
W., 243

Yea, grasp the cup,\* for all we love  
and own,  
O'er which the tendrils of our hearts  
have grown,  
Melt swift as morning dew beneath  
the sun,  
Shine one brief hour, and then, alas,  
are gone !

A, C, D, E,  
F, H

58

Bod., VIII, 72  
McC., 461  
N., 372  
Vill., 715  
Von S., 92  
W., 415

And though the cup be full and sweet,  
what then ?  
The last brief day of life must come,  
what then ?  
Although you've lived an hundred  
years of joy,  
Or have an hundred years to live,  
what then ?

A, C, D, E,  
F, G, H

† Lit. "Without a familiar and without a companion and without a friend or wife."

57

\* *i. e.* Enjoy the good things of life.

There are several variations of this quatrain. FitzGerald translates from A, 266.

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., IV, 14 Cad., 101 F.G., V, 64 Gar., VIII, 7 McC., 160 N., 217 Vill., 462 W., 258</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">59</p> <p>And think, from all the myriads gone before, Not one returns to 'count the journey o'er ; So yield up naught for hope of prom- ised bliss ; Departed once, thou shalt return no more.</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., VIII, 6 Cad., 21 F.G., V, 18 Gar., V, 2 McC., 151 N., 69 Vill., 205 Von S., 199 W., 72</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">60</p> <p>In yonder mansion of the mighty dead, Where Bahram feasted, prowling lions tread, And where his cunning lasso caught the gur,* Behold, the gur has closed o'er Bah- ram's head.</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., VIII, 60 F.G., II, 20 Gar., V, 4 McC., 364 N., 350</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">61</p> <p>And yonder palace tow'ring to the blue, Where kings, in homage, to the por- tals drew,</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

60

\* *Gur* signifies either the wild ass or the grave. Bahram met his death in a quicksand while chasing the *gur*.

Note the alliteration in this quatrain; the similar sounds of *gaf* and *kaf* occurring thirteen times in the four lines.

# RUBAI'YAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Vill., 677  
Von S., 189  
W., 392

I heard the lonely ring-dove moaning  
there,  
And sobbing soft her plaintive "Coo,  
coo, coo?"

62

Bod., VIII, 33  
Gar., V, 1  
McC., 50  
N., 237  
Vill., 492  
Von S., 119  
W., 277

And once, at Tus,\* from off an aged  
bough,  
Methought a raven lit upon the brow  
Of Khosru's skull,† and thus it  
spake, "Oh, king,  
What clarion hails thy royal glory  
now?"

A, C, F, G,  
H

63

McC., 292  
N., 198  
Vill., 435  
W., 242

Wide yawns the tomb where you and  
I, sweet friend,  
Shall each, in turn, to lifeless dust  
descend!  
Oh draught of death that steeps the  
very soul  
In dreamless sleep, unconscious to  
the end!\*

A, C, D, E,  
F, G, H

61

\* Ku, ku, ku = Where? Where? Where?

ك (ku) is an abbreviation of كج (kuja).

62

\* Tus was the mediæval capital of Khorasan.

† For the sake of meter, Khosru is substituted for Kai Kawus. It is remarkable that Mr. J. H. McCarthy has done the same thing in a prose translation.

63

\* روز شمار (ruz-i-shamar), the Day of Reckoning.

[ 56 ]

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

	64	
Bod., II, 8 Cad., 13 Gar., VIII, 8 H. A., 23 McC., 18 N., 43 Vill., 81 Von S., 94 W., 46	Khayyám, why drown thyself in sorrow here? What though thy sins like ocean sands appear? Mercy can reach thee, though it pass the pure; 'T is made for sinners, wherefore dost thou fear?	A, B, C, D, F, G, H
	65	
Bod., II, 12 Cad., 91 H. A., 91 McC., 323 N., 200 Vill., 433 W., 244	Go toss commandment * to the passing wind, Nor with tradition † keep thy soul confined; Pay hate with love, enjoy the ruddy wine, Nor fear the grave, nor what there is behind.	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H
	66	
Bod., VI, 5 Cad., 61 F. G., V, 15 Gar., I, 27 H. A., 68	Ere Fate lay low thy head, the goblet drain, Bring forth the rosy cup and staunch thy pain; —	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H

65

\* The Farizat are the divine ordinances.

† The Sunnat, or Traditions, are held in great reverence by Muhammadans.

Whinfield reads,

سنت مكن و فريضة حق بگذار

"Heed not the Sunnat, nor the law divine," which is nearly identical with the Ouseley MS.

Nicolas reads,

از طاعتها فريضة حق بگذار

"Des dogmes de la religion n'admets que ce qui t'oblige envers la Divinité."

[ 57 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

McC., 277  
N., 156  
Vill., 281  
W., 175

Oh, heedless fool, art thou a golden  
store  
That men will bury and dig up  
again ?

67

Cad., 143  
H. A., 123  
N., 327  
Vill., 664  
W., 368

Drink, if thou wilt, or fail to watch  
and pray,  
Or break the fasts, or plunder by the  
way ;  
Hear now the Word of Truth from  
old Khayyám, —  
No loving heart can wander far astray.

A, B, C, D,  
E, F, G, H

68

Cad., 50  
H. A., 36  
Vill., 97  
W., 106

And when the rose shall bloom o'er  
Nature's shrine,  
And friends invite, and buoyant  
youth is thine,  
Lift high the bowl — eternal life is  
there —  
And drown thy sorrows in the joys  
of wine.

B, F, H

69

Bod., V, 11  
F. G., V, 75  
McC., 219  
N., 110  
Vill., 289

When Allah set the steeds of Heaven  
free,  
Loosed bright Parwín \* and shining  
Mushtarí, †

A, C, D, E,  
F, G, H

69

\* Parwin, the Pleiades.

† Mushtari, Jupiter,

[ 58 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

Von S., 264  
W., 140

My life, my lot, by Kismat † was  
ordained ;  
And all my sins are part of Des-  
tiny.

70

Bod., II, 2  
McC., 237  
N., 268  
Vill., 542  
Von S., 307  
W., 311

Who fashioned me of moistened clay ?  
Not I !  
Who spun my silk and wool array ?  
Not I !  
And who the good and ill of all my  
life  
Upon my forehead wrote ? Not I !  
Not I ! !

A, C, D, E,  
G, H

71

Bod., VII, 17  
Cad., 116  
H. A., 105  
N., 249  
Vill., 508  
W., 288

Then mark my scanty virtues one by  
one,  
And, ten by ten, forgive the wrongs  
I've done ;  
Nor fan the flame and, by the Proph-  
et's tomb,  
The fire will die and anger's heat be  
gone.

B, F, G, H

† Kismat, Fate.

[ 59 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

	72	
Bod., I, 2 Cad., 129 H. A., 109 McC., 217 N., 282 Vill., 543 W., 322	My nature oft o'ercomes my might, — alas ! * My deeds bring woe, howe'er I fight, — alas ! And though I trust God's pardon shall be mine, The shame will never leave my sight, — alas !	A, B, C, D, F, G, H
	73	
Bod., II, 22 F. G., V, 80 Gar., VIII, 2 H. A., 148 McC., 296 N., 390 P., 55 Vill., 822 Von S., 168 W., 432	But thou who settest in the way a snare, With threats of hell for all who stumble there, Almighty Spirit, whom the spheres obey, Is mine the sin, or Thine the greater share ?	B, G, H
	74	
N., 380 Vill., 354 W., 421	Whate'er my life, it dawned at thy command, Whate'er my nature, 't is what Thou hast plann'd ; Nor worse, nor better, than it came from Thee — A helpless thing, the creature of Thy hand.	A, C, D, F, G, H

\* Lit. "What can I do?"

The throwing back of the rhyme-word several syllables often occurs in the ruba'iyat.

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., IX, 66 Cad., 53 F.G., V, 48 Gar., I, 32 H. A., 60 McC., 165 N., 106 Vill., 251 VonS., 276 W., 136</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">75</p> <p>The caravan of life moves strangely on, It wanes and fades, then waxes clear anon ; Why fret, bright saki, o'er to- morrow's doom ? Come, fill the goblet, ere the night be gone !</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., X, 31 F.G., V, 98 Gar., XIII, 9 McC., 448 N., 457 Vill., 841 VonS., 238 W., 486</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">76</p> <p>But oh, that God would make this world anew, Before mine eyes rebuild it, fair and true, Or from the roll of life blot out my name, Or take from life my wrongs and burdens too.</p>	<p>G, H</p>
<p>Bod., V, 25 F.G., V, 99 Gar., IV, 8 McC., 378 N., 340 P., 52 Vill., 641 VonS., 11 W., 379</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">77</p> <p>If I were God, how swift mine anger dire Would sweep away this universe en- tire And build a better, where the soul, set free, Might sometimes reach its inmost heart's desire.</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>



# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

H. A., 49 W., 217	<p style="text-align: center;">78</p> <p>A voice that haunts the path of pleasure * calls, And ev'ry hour the awful warning falls — " Know now, forever, when you die, YOU DIE, And Spring's soft voice no human soul recalls ! "</p>	A, B, C, D, E, F, H
Bod., IV, 4 Cad., 62 H. A., 51 McC., 195 N., 157 P., 31 Vill., 239 Von S., 289 W., 176	<p style="text-align: center;">79</p> <p>Then oh, what profit to the sphere * my birth ? Or, when I die, what will my death be worth ? Or who beneath the vault of Heav'n can tell Or why we come, or why we leave the earth ?</p>	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H
Bod., X, 40 Cad., 88b F. G., V, 65 Gar., XII, 7 N., 464	<p style="text-align: center;">80</p> <p>And though they be the noble and the wise, Though prophets come and lofty seers arise,</p>	A, C, D, E, F, G, H

78

- \* Lit. This intellect that searches the path of happiness.

79

- \* گاردن (gardún) is the celestial sphere.

[ 62 ]

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

Vill., 266  
Von S., 162  
W., 209

E'en these emerge not from the sable  
night,  
But tell their dreams and then reclose  
their eyes.

81

Bod., IV, 3  
F. G., V, 26  
McC., 252  
N., 120  
Vill., 328  
Von S., 267  
W., 147

And those who led the mighty hosts  
of thought,  
And scaled the heav'ns and many a  
myst'ry sought,  
Became amazed whene'er they  
thought of Thee,  
Their minds were dizzied and their  
wisdom naught.

A, C, F, G,  
H

82

Cad., 80  
H. A., 48  
Vill., 290  
W., 222

And we who love to drain the flagon  
deep,  
And ye who pray and nightly vigils  
keep,  
We neither know, we both are cast  
adrift;  
But One, He knows; the rest are fast  
asleep.

B, F, H

83

Bod., IV, 20  
Cad., 113  
H. A., 101  
McC., 82  
N., 240  
Vill., 507  
W., 280

Take counsel, then, and give thine  
ear to me,  
For Allah's sake cast off hypocrisy;  
The future is forever, earth but now;  
For one brief hour sell not eternity.

A, B, C, D,  
F, G, H

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Cad., 73 F.G., V, 54 H. A., 50 Vill., 267 W., 216</p>	<p>84</p> <p>"Oh, learned fools," the voice of Wisdom saith, "Why spend the hours in talk of life and death? "Tis dried up fruit, go taste the vine instead; On what can ne'er be known, why waste your breath?"*</p>	<p>B, H</p>
<p>Bod., X, 9 Cad., 93 F.G., V, 37 Gar., III, 9 H. A., 89 H. P., 7 McG., 245 N., 211 P., 36 Vill., 434 W., 252</p>	<p>85</p> <p>When in the market-place I stopped one day To watch a potter pounding his fresh clay, The clay addressed him in a mystic tongue — "Once I was man, so treat me gently, pray!"</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., III, 3 Cad., 10 F.G., V, 36 Gar., III, 3 H. A., 9 McG., 73 N., 28 Vill., 80 Von S., 5 W., 32</p>	<p>86</p> <p>Then thought I how that handle once embraced With yearning touch some peri- slender waist; And how, perchance, those sad, complaining lips In rapture, once, on other lips were placed.</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

84

\* This quatrain is not a faithful paraphrase.

The last line, *گان به خنجران مغرور سمور شدند*, is so obscure that, as Mr. Heron-Allen remarks, it baffles satisfactory translation.

[ 64 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., VIII, 7 Gar., III, 7 McC., 270 N., 119 P., 22 Vill., 264 Von S., 4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">87</p> <p>But on the potter sped, nor seemed to feel The touching pathos of his clay's appeal, Nor thought how some poor, helpless human frame Lay prone before him on the busy wheel.</p>	<p>G</p>
<p>Bod., III, 7 McC., 164 N., 76 Vill., 182 Von S., 163 W., 78</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">88</p> <p>Oh, thoughtless man, this mortal clay is naught ; — The azure vault of Heav'n itself is naught ; — Then take what joy you may, your very life Is but a passing breath — and that is naught !</p>	<p>F, G, H</p>
<p>F.G., V, 32 McC., 2 Vill., 628 W., 389</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">89</p> <p>No mortal eye can find the hidden key, Nor read the secret of eternity ; * Of Thee and me, behind the veil, they speak, But when 't is rent, no more of Thee and me. †</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, H</p>

89

\* *Asrar-i-Azal* (Asrar-i-Azal), the secret of eternity.  
Compare Quatrain No. 30.

† The World-figment of Duality (Thee and me) disappears when the veil of human illusion is rent and all are one in God.



# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., VII, 41 H. A., 140 McC., 341 N., 384 Vill., 739 Von S., 160 W., 428 Compare F. G., V, 28</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">90</p> <p>For oh, bright saki, they who passed before, To dust have dropped beyond the mystic door ; Their lofty themes have turned to empty wind, And now their lips lie locked for evermore.</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., V, 20 Gar., X, 8 McC., 63 N., 232 Vill., 484 Von S., 190 W., 271</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">91</p> <p>That ancient puzzle * of the spheres, ah me, What endless toil to read the mystery ! 'Tis but a phantom from the bound- less deep, Blown back again o'er death's mys- terious sea !</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., I, 25 Gar., XI, 6 McC., 101 N., 39 Vill., 192 Von S., 93 W., 43</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">92</p> <p>But life shall rise from death on soaring wing, And all our fears from baseless visions spring ; Since 'Isa's breath revived my wearied soul, Where art thou, death ? Oh, grave, where is thy sting ! *</p>	<p>F, G, H</p>

\* The Maya or illusion of life.

\* Lit. "Eternal death has washed its hands of my being."

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

93

Bod., I, 1  
McC., 439  
N., 365  
Vill., 727  
Von S., 120  
W., 410

Sad, severed from the sea, a rain-drop  
sighed ;  
And, smiling gently, thus the sea  
replied : —  
" Oh, naught divides us, for in God  
we dwell,  
But one in all, for all in One abide."\*

G, H

93

\* This quatrain scarcely admits the possibility of a satisfactory translation. Omar tells us that in truth there is none other but God, in whom we are all one; and that it is only by the revolution of a single point that we are separated.

The point to which he refers is the dot in the word **خدا** (Khuda), the God who is the fountain of life and from whom we are only temporarily separated.

At the soul's birth, it may be said, the revolution of the point commences, and **خدا** (Khuda) becomes **جدا** (juda), a word indicating separation. But the separation is not forever. As the point continues to revolve, **جدا** (juda) again becomes **خدا** (Khuda); and finally our souls are reabsorbed in the divine fountain whence they came.

This stanza, considered in connection with stanzas 101, 102, and 103, appears to indicate the conclusion to which Omar's knowledge of natural philosophy had led him. Matter is, to him, indestructible, eternal, although its form is capable of endless changes; — the human body of to-day is the earthen vessel or the fragrant flower of to-morrow; — the verdure that clothes the river's bank to-day was, yesterday, the form of a lovely woman; and even the very dust beneath our feet was once, perhaps, the heaving eye of a ravishing beauty.

So, too, the philosopher-poet must have seen that energy is indestructible, — now taking one shape, now another; ever with us indeed, but often hiding its presence behind the mask of an unknown form. To-day, the rays of a summer sun fall upon the snowy peaks of the distant mountains, and to-morrow the snow is a mighty river rushing onward to the sea; — to-day, the sun smiles upon the ocean, coaxing its vapours up to Heaven, and to-morrow a gentle rain falls upon the face of the thirsty soil; — now, the hot iron is plunged into the vessel of cold water and its heat is lost, but the water has become warmer, for that which was lost has been found.

Hence, arguing from analogy, Omar seems to have considered life as a thing indestructible, — changeable in form, as matter and energy are changeable, and,

[ 67 ]

# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Vill., 689  
W., 400

94

Oh Thou my strength, my very being's whole,  
Heart of my heart, and soul within my soul,  
From Thee alone I come, and Thou art mine,  
My source, my life, my parting spirit's goal.\*

F, H

Bod., V, 5  
Cad., 15  
H. A., 24  
McC., 62  
N., 46  
P., 9  
Vill., 177  
Von S., 133  
W., 49

95

And though in synagogue, mosque, school, or cell,  
Men, seeking Heav'n and fearing Sheol, dwell;  
Yet he who knows the secret truth of God  
Sows no such chaff and scorns the fear of Hell.\*

A, B, C, D,  
E, F, G, H

like them, eternal, immortal. Thus, when our turn comes, we shall suffer no more separation, but, led back from **فراق** (separation) to **حضور** (God), we shall rest once more upon the bosom whence we sprang.

While the conclusion thus reached is in accordance with the Vedanta doctrine of the reabsorption of the individual soul in the Impersonal Self, the Vedanta philosophers taught that all matter was part of the world-figment, a mere illusion, and hence not eternal; but whether Omar shared this view, or arrived at his conclusion in the way I have suggested, his belief in the ultimate reabsorption of the soul in God is beyond doubt.

94

\* This quatrain evidently refers to the Sufi belief that we finally return to the Fountain of Life.

95

\* "Souls reabsorbed in the Divine Essence have no concern with the material Heaven and Hell."—WHINFIELD.

[ 68 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

F.G., V, 48  
Vill., 431  
W., 254

96

Deep from the circle of the hidden  
sphere,  
To each, in turn, the cup of death  
draws near ;  
Then do not sigh, but when it comes  
to thee,  
Take thou the cup and drink it with-  
out fear.

A, C, D, E,  
F, H

Bod., VIII, 53  
F. G., V, 25  
Gar., XII, 12  
McC., 434  
N., 337  
P., 51  
Vill., 638  
Von S., 8  
W., 376

97

And ye who ponder over creed and  
prayer,  
And ye who, dazed by doubt, well-  
nigh despair,  
Oh, hear the voice that, sudden, cries  
aloud —  
“Fools, the right path is neither  
there, nor there !”

A, C, D, F,  
G, H

Bod., I, 38  
F. G., V, 50  
Gar., VIII, 16  
McC., 46  
N., 20  
Vill., 130  
W., 24

98

'Tis but a breath betwixt the false  
and true,  
'Twixt faith and doubt, and soul and  
body too ;  
Oh, *carpe diem* ! all that life can  
give  
Is one short breath, and then — ah,  
would we knew !

A, C, D, E,  
F, G, H





# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., VII, 44 McC., 345 N., 389 Vill., 775 W., 431 Compare F.G., V, 35</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">99</p> <p>Embarrassed offspring of the primal four, And sev'nfold Heav'n, — the myst'ry whelms thee o'er ; Drink deep, my friend, I've told thee many a time, Departed once, thou shalt return no more.</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Cad., 49 H. A., 39 Vill., 57 W., 105</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">100</p> <p>The wine's a ruby and the cup a mine ; The cup is body, and the soul is wine ; But ah, the crystal cup contains a tear, — A bleeding heart is hidden in the vine.</p>	<p>B, F, H</p>
<p>Bod., I, 32 F. G., V, 51 Gar., X, 1 McC., 58 N., 73 Vill., 175 Von S., 52 W., 75</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">101</p> <p>And lo, this vintage* running through the veins Of all creation, o'er creation reigns ; In plants and creatures many a form sustains, And though they die, the essence still remains.†</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

## 101

\* For *ان باداه* (an badah), that vintage, as Whinfield, Nicolas, and others read, the Calcutta MS. reads *ان ماه* (an mah), that moon, a variation which perhaps was intended for *ان ماي* (an mai), that vintage, a reading that would accord better with the other texts.

† The later followers of the Vedanta sages taught that the soul can pass through many conditions, from the lowest terrestrial organism to that of a god-like denizen of Heaven, by a process of gradual development ; but that, however

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Bod., VIII, 92 F.G., V, 23 McC., 156 N., 70 Vill., 187 Von S., 50 W., 73</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">102</p> <p>And when the clouds arise, with Imber's plume, And rains, caressing, coax the earth to bloom, Oh, think what blossoms from our dust shall spring, And throw their fragrance on the breeze, — for whom ?</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., VI, 24 F.G., V, 20 Gar., IV, 3 McC., 123 N., 59 Vill., 61 Von S., 84 W., 62</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">103</p> <p>And those soft robes yon shaded streamlets wear, Perchance may spring from some celestial fair ; Ah, scorn them not, nor, careless, tread them o'er ; Who knows what beauty's head lies resting there ?</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., III, 4 Gar., VI, 7 McC., 75 N., 29 Vill., 113</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">104</p> <p>Nay, crush them not, for long ere we were born, Day changed to night and night again to morn ;</p>	<p>A, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>

great its virtue, it cannot be reabsorbed in the Divine Essence until it learns the one great truth of its impersonal unity with the Undifferented Self, — with the great First Principle that underlies the world-figment, or Maya, of which even the heavens and the gods are themselves a part.

The doctrine of Metempsychosis appears to have been absorbed by the early Aryans from some of the lower races with whom they came into contact, and it certainly mars the singular beauty of their earlier belief.

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Von S., 263  
W., 33

This dust, perchance, was once a  
beaming eye,  
Or lovely mole, by bright-eyed beauty  
worn.

105

Bod., VIII, 35  
Cad., 126  
F.G., V, 21  
Gar., VI, 6  
McC., 194  
N., 269  
Vill., 586  
Von S., 308  
W., 312

Come, friend, an hour of pleasure  
ere we go,  
For life's sweet breath will soon be  
sinking low ;  
To-morrow's dawn may find both  
you and me  
With those who went sev'n thousand  
years ago.\*

A, C, D, E,  
F, G, H

106

H. A., 126  
W., 386

And yonder skies too often tear away  
Our dearest friends, and all our hopes  
betray ;  
So, Darling, live — live now, while  
life is ours ;  
To-morrow's naught, and naught is  
yesterday.

B, F, H

105

\* Whinfield appends the following note : —

“Badauni (II, 337) says the creation of Adam was 7000 years before his time.”

[ 72 ]

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Cad., 98 H. A., 92	<p style="text-align: center;">107</p> <p>And see, this cup hath rose-red wine, — may be ; This crystal cup's a ruby mine, — may be ; This water sparkles with a melted gem ; Through moonlight's veil the sun- beams shine, — may be.</p>	B
Bod., VI, 29 McC., 120 N., 3 Vill., 22 W., 2	<p style="text-align: center;">108</p> <p>Who brought thee here this eve at twilight, — who ? From harem's gloom to sparkling moonlight, — who ? Who raised thy veil to fan the love that burns When thou art absent ; who, my lovelight, — who ?</p>	A, C, D, E, F, G, H
Bod., I, 5 McC., 122 N., 2 Vill., 21	<p style="text-align: center;">109</p> <p>Thou precious jewel of this yearning heart, Choice of my spirit, of my soul a part, — What is so dear to me as life, but thou ? And sweeter far than life itself thou art.</p>	G

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

<p>Cad., 1 F.G., V, 100 Gar., II, 4 H. A., 5 McC., 9 N., 8 Vill., 4 Von S., 96 W., 7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">110</p> <p>Drink 'neath the moonbeams, greet me with a song ; To-night we live, sweet moon,* and love is strong ; To-morrow, when we lie beneath the sod, The moon shall seek us, and shall seek us long.</p>	<p>A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H</p>
<p>Bod., IX, 107 Gar., II, 3 McC., 47 N., 94 Vill., 202 Von S., 313</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">111</p> <p>She tears night's robe and lo, the gloom has fled ; So drink, my love, for when our souls have sped, This selfsame moon will rise the same, and set, Nor shadow mark the mighty world o'erhead,</p>	<p>G</p>
<p>H. A., 58 Vill., 274 W., 214</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">112</p> <p>Those countless orbs that roll o'er Heaven's main, Perplex the learn'd, their myst'ries still remain ;</p>	<p>B, F, H</p>

## 110

\* Note the play upon the word *mah* in the line

س درون ماهی ماه ای ماه که ماه

Mai nush banur-i-mah ai mah ki mah

The first *mah* signifies *the moon*; the second, a *beautiful woman*; and the third, either *the moon* or *the month*.

# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYA'M

Oh, seek not whence they come, or  
whither bound,  
The wise grow dizzy 'neath their  
mighty train.

113

And Thou, who hidest now behind  
the blue,  
In all existence art Thou seen anew ;  
Thy wondrous deeds to please Thy-  
self are done ;  
Thou art the actor and spectator too.

A, C, D, E,  
F, G, H

Bod., I, 8  
F.G., V, 51  
and 52  
Gar., X, 5  
McC., 346  
N., 443  
Vill., 757  
Von S., 172  
W., 475

114

'Tis but a moment, and the myst'ry's  
gone, —  
A breath, a whisper, and the secret's  
done ;  
This mighty universe and all there-  
in —  
Earth, sky, — man, angel, God, —  
All, All are One.\*

F, G, H

Bod., III, 17  
Gar., X, 2  
McC., 426  
N., 328  
Vill., 629  
W., 369

114

- \* Justice is the soul of the universe and the whole universe is a body ;  
The angels are the perceptions of this body ;  
The heavens and the elements and their offspring are its members ;  
There is only unity and the rest is all deception.

The belief in the existence of God in everything, since everything is a part of  
God, pervades the poetry of the Sufis ; thus, Jami writes : —

گویند که جام خوانم ترا  
کی داند که دایم خوانم ترا  
جز نام تو بر لوح جهان حرمی نیست  
بها بخدم نام خوانم ترا

[ 75 ]



# RUBA'IYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

115 \*

One eve, when Ramazan was nearly  
o'er,  
I chanced, again, within the potter's  
door,  
Where earthen pots of many a shape  
and size  
Upon the table lay, and on the floor.

116

And some were wrapped in silence,  
others not ;  
And one spake loudly, 'mid a wrang-  
ling lot —  
“ Why talk ye thus and thus, ye  
know not what ?  
Who is the potter, pray, and who the  
pot ? ”

Compare  
Bod., IV, 16  
Cad., 115  
F.G., V, 82,  
83, 87  
Gar., III, 8  
H. A., 103  
McC., 115  
N., 243  
Vill., 509  
Von S., 226  
W., 283

Quotations  
on left-hand  
margin are  
translations  
of quatrains  
found in  
A, B, C, D,  
E, F, G, H

Sometimes the wine, sometimes the cup I call Thee ;  
Sometimes the grain, sometimes the net I call Thee ;  
Save Thy name, there is not a letter upon the tablet of the universe.  
Oh, by what name shall I call Thee ?

This stanza offers a good illustration of the *throw-back* and *redif*, as the rhyme-words *jam*, *dam*, and *nam* are thrown back to the middle of their respective lines.

115

\* This, and the succeeding quatrains, have only a slender foundation in the ruba'iyat of Omar. Suggested by the work of Mr. FitzGerald, they were written prior to the foregoing translation, and retained, as already stated in the introduction, for the purpose of indicating, by marginal reference, some of the sources of his charming *Kuza Nama*.

Those who are desirous of consulting the Persian quatrains upon which they rest are referred to numbers 283, 126, 193, 218, and 493 of Whinfield's text,

[ 76 ]

117

"Well," said another, "you have  
naught to say;  
If still the potter live, he's far away;  
We are the pots, but then, what do  
we here?  
The buyer and the seller, where are  
they?"

118

Then spake a vessel of less comely  
make —  
"They say that when the potter  
comes he'll break  
All shapes ungainly. Are the pots  
to blame  
Because the hand that made them  
chanced to shake?"

119

"Thy handle's cracked, my spout is  
all awry,  
Nor can we change them, howsoe'er  
we try;  
For his mistake, shall we be thrown  
aside,  
Lest our ill shape offend his perfect  
eye?"

A, C, D, E,  
F, H

Compare  
F.G., V, 86  
Vill., 103  
W., 126

edition of 1883. The clearness of the type, the presence of the kasra-i-isafat, and the use of accents that prevent ambiguity, greatly simplify the reading of this text.



# RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

	120	
Bod., II, 3 F.G., V, 88 McC., 281 N., 178 Vill., 318 Von S., 75 W., 193	<p>“Are we to blame, and so be cast to Hell ?</p> <p>Can this be true, as some wise pipkins tell ?”</p> <p>“No, no,” cried out a pious little pot,</p> <p>“He ’ll have some mercy, and ’t will all be well !”</p>	A, C, D, E, F, G, H
	121	
Compare Cad., 84 F.G., V, 90 H. A., 158 Vill., 458 W., 218	<p>And while they talked, the time sped quickly on,</p> <p>Till new-moon came, and Ramazán * was gone ;</p> <p>And stealing softly through the open door,</p> <p>A dusky porter seized them, one by one.</p>	B, H
	122	
Compare F.G., V, 38 McC., 14 Vill., 773 W., 493	<p>And down the ages has the story rolled,</p> <p>Of red-clay fashioned into human mould,</p> <p>And filled by Allah, with the breath of life,</p> <p>Till Death steals through the door,</p> <p>and ALL IS TOLD !</p>	A, C, D, E, F, H

121

\* Ramazán, the ninth month of the Muhammadan year, is devoted to fasting; hence, at its close, the vessels would be needed for the feasting of Shawwal, the tenth month.

سلام حد

**Poems written for the 20th Anniversary of  
the founding of the  
Omar Khayyam Club of America**

---

**I**

Friend Omar, thy voice is still singing,  
Altho' thou art with us no more,  
Thy numbers in melody ringing  
Aloud on our Western shore.

**II**

In the highways of Worcester I hear thee,  
And down by the Southern seas,  
In the glorious prairies of Texas  
Thy music is flung to the breeze.

**III**

And here in the City of Boston  
Where Freedom her Glory hath shed,  
Where Knowledge and Wisdom are cherished,  
We gather to honor the dead.

**IV**

And tho' for a while we're divided,  
We too shall return to the sod  
Where all living things are united  
To dwell in the bosom of God.

**V**

Where anger and enmity perish,  
Where sorrow forever is o'er,  
Where sickness and pain cannot follow  
And grief can pursue us no more.

**VI**

Where Khuda in love doth enfold us  
And taketh our souls to his breast,  
Where blessed Nirvána doth hold us  
At peace in the Kingdom of Rest.

**VII**

And there shall our spirits awaken  
When all are absorbed in the Whole,  
When the Maya of Self is forsaken  
And Union with God is the Goal.

**George Bar**  
**San Antonio, Texas, 1920**

